

# City to ask county to seek block grant

## Would go toward mill restoration project

By KYLE JARVIS  
Staff Writer

City Manager Guy Santagate has committed to seeking out Community Development Block Grant money from the county to help finance part of the mill restoration project.

Each year the federal government allots a certain amount of CDBG money for each state. It's then up to the states to award that money to various municipalities, counties, or nonprofit groups throughout their state.

In Claremont's case, the city has exceeded its annual limit for CDBG money, but the county hasn't.

"We're going to ask the county to apply for \$500,000 in CDBG money, mostly for investment in the Wainshal, Peterson, Woven Label, and Sawtooth mill buildings and the projects associat-

ed with those properties," Santagate said Thursday.

The Wainshal building is slated for 60,000 square feet of office space, including Red River Computer Company's new headquarters, and the Common Man Inn.

Sugar River Mills Redevelopment LLC, the corporation formed by the investment partners involved in the mill project, will basically re-receive the money as a loan through the county, should the county be awarded the grant.

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The corporation hopes to have an office in the Wainshal building as well.

The Common Man Group hopes to open a restaurant in the old Woven Label building on the Sugar River in association with the inn next door.

"It becomes a grant for the county, and a loan for Sugar River Mills Redevelopment LLC," said Santagate. "They pay it back to the county through a seven-year low interest loan, and then the money stays in a revolving loan fund that the county can continue to distribute for other projects and have paid back through low-interest loans."

Santagate said the CDBG program is "one of the best the federal government has ever come up with ... we've been pushing hard for Concord to start

thinking of western New Hampshire and especially Claremont more often when it comes to grant money."

The money is administered through the state planning office.

The city has already received \$500,000 in CDBG money for the Sawtooth mill building on Main and Central streets, likely the site of a new parking garage that will create 256 new parking spaces. Another 144 are to be added in other areas yet to be determined.

A public hearing will be held on the CDBG application during the county commissioners' meeting at 3 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 18, in the commissioners' conference room in Newport.